THE VERSE ADAPTATIONS OF AVIANUS. PART 1: THE ASTENSIS AND ITS DERIVATIVES

BY

EILEEN PATRICIA RYAN

A.B., Monmouth College, 1935

A.M., University of Illinois, 1936

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN CLASSICS IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, 1940

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In this dissertation is treated the earliest extant adaptation in verse of the Latin fabulist, Avianus, the Astensis, together with its two derivatives, the Venetian and Bavarian adaptations, which are clearly dependent upon it. These three Novi Aviani have been selected from more than ten verse imitations, partly because they are the oldest and partly because they constitute a distinct unit. They are written in leonine elegiac distichs and date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

For each adaptation there has been prepared an introduction, text, and apparatus criticus.

The Astensis adaptation is found in two eleventh century manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, and in one thirteenth century manuscript in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich. It is an expansion containing 1091 verses. In this edition about half a dozen emendations have been offered, all three manuscripts very rarely being corrupt at the same point. In the introduction to the adaptation is found a detailed account of each of the three manuscripts including date and provenience. A comparison of the manuscripts reveals that the Munich manuscript is only slightly superior to the two closely related Brussels manuscripts. There follows a detailed description of the contents, the prologue, titles, invocations, morals, and the somewhat artificial division of the fables into three books treating of 1) presumption, 2) faults, and 3) credulity. It is argued that no markedly altered and influential adaptation intervened between the Vetus Avianus and the Astensis. The author of the Astensis leaned heavily on poets of the classical period, especially Ovid and Vergil. The date of the composition is roughly determined through that of the Brussels manuscripts, and the almost perfect system of leonine rhymes found in the work. The place of writing is fairly certain, for the author refers to himself as a poet of Asti, speaks of the Versa and the Burbur streams, and mons Franchini (heretofore misunderstood), all of which are found within a short radius of the old town of Asti in northern Italy.

The Venetian adaptation existing in only one manuscript (dated 1378 A.D.) which is in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, has hitherto been unedited. It is a slight expansion in 692 verses

of the Vetus, consisting of a prologue and fables 1-40 which occur in the same order as in Avianus. The Astensis as well as Avianus serves as a model for the composition. There are offered for this text about one hundred and fifty emendations. In the introduction attention has been called to its extremely close dependence upon the Vetus Avianus, to its debt to the Astensis, and to its probable influence upon the Bavarian adaptation. The composition is assigned to the late eleventh or early twelfth century. The author is anonymous and the exact place of writing is unknown.

The Bavarian adaptation, in leonine elegiacs also, like the preceding, is based primarily on the same two models, Vetus Avianus and the Astensis. It occurs in two closely related manuscripts, one of the fourteenth century in the Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, and the other, dated 1467, in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich. It represents a slight contraction in 562 verses and contains fables 1-30, 32-42 in the original order. About fifteen emendations have been made in the text.

VITA

Eileen Patricia Ryan was born in Davenport, Iowa, January 22, 1913. She was graduated from Monmouth High School, Monmouth, Illinois, 1931, being elected to membership in the National Honor Society in that year. She received the B.A. degree in 1935, cum laude, from Monmouth College where she was a member of Sigma Omicron Mu (honorary scholastic fraternity). Since the fall of 1935 she has been enrolled as a graduate student in the Classics Department of the University of Illinois, receiving the M.A. degree in 1936. She held a scholarship, 1935-6, a fellowship, 1936-7, and an assistantship in Classics, 1937-8 and 1938-9. She is a member of Eta Sigma Phi.

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